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ABSTRACT

This report provides a detailed overview of public-school accreditation in Mississippi. It opens with a short history of accreditation, which began in the 1890s. Early efforts were organized around the University of Mississippi, which had formulated programs of study that would prepare high-school students for college. These efforts evolved into a state board of education that was given the power and authority to prescribe the standards and procedures for the accreditation of schools. The report explores the current accreditation policies of the state board of education, as well as its administrative policies, such as membership, appointment, terms of office, duties, officers, meetings, expenses, and staff. Accreditation standards are discussed next, followed by a description of the district accreditation policy. Included in this description are details on assignment of statuses, process standards, accreditation statuses, and notification of deficiencies after assignment of status. Further details are given on the school-performance classification policy, such as assignment of classifications, performance standards, and priority schools. Other parts of the policy that are addressed are monitoring procedures, which includes evaluations and audits; hearing and appeal procedures; process standards; and developing school-performance standards. Appendices list graduation requirements and other information. (Contains a glossary.) (RJM)

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MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

2001

Mississippi Department of Education

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History

THE HISTORY OF ACCREDITATION IN MISSISSIPPI

Since the early 1900s, accreditation has sought to improve schools through the requirements of the accrediting agency. In Mississippi, the roots of school accreditation are found in the institutions of higher learning and state teachers' associations. It all began in 1896 when the University of Mississippi first published a program of studies for an approved high school. The schools that met the University's prescribed program of studies were officially listed as affiliated high schools, and the graduates of those schools were admitted to the University on the basis of their records (certificates), without examination. The list included white high schools in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee, and it was soon recognized as the approved list by the other colleges in the state.

The effort to regulate the program of studies in secondary schools was strengthened in 1918 when the University requested the Mississippi Education Association to appoint a committee to classify the affiliated high schools. The Association appointed five members to a High School Classifying Committee and required this group to establish standards of classification, to devise a system for grouping high schools, and to assign each high school to its appropriate group. The responsibilities and workload of this subsidiary committee of the Mississippi Education Association continued to grow, and the need for full-time statewide supervision of high schools soon became apparent. This need was met in 1919 when the position of state supervisor of secondary schools was created in the Mississippi Department of Education. In May of 1920, the High School Classifying Committee became the State High School Accrediting Commission, a standing committee of the Mississippi Education Association. The State Supervisor of Secondary Schools chaired the first Commission, whose membership consisted of representatives from two high schools, the A and M College, Millsaps College, Mississippi College, the Mississippi State College for Women, and the University of Mississippi. This Commission required high schools to meet eleven minimum standards before being accredited and defined an accredited high school as one that meets all requirements and, after inspection, has been approved by the Commission.

Accreditation of elementary schools was not addressed until 1926. During that year, the Mississippi Education Association created the Elementary School Accrediting Commission to perform the same duties in regulating programs for elementary schools that the High School Accrediting Commission did for secondary schools. The Elementary Commission consisted of ten members, with the newly appointed State Elementary School Supervisor serving as executive secretary of the group.

Operating as separate entities, these two Commissions regulated the elementary and secondary programs in white schools until 1949 when they were discontinued by the Mississippi Education Association, and the Mississippi Accrediting Commission was formed.

The first efforts to accredit black schools began in 1935 when the Mississippi Association for Teachers in Colored Schools organized the Negro Accrediting Commission. In 1947 the Mississippi Association for Teachers in Colored Schools became the Mississippi Teachers Association, and the Commission continued to operate under the renamed teachers' association until 1959. During that year, the name was changed to the State Accrediting Commission, and one of the first official actions of this group was to adopt the existing rules and regulations of the Mississippi Accrediting Commission.

The decade of the sixties found these two Commissions sharing responsibilities for accrediting black and white schools; and, in carrying out their duties, both groups made extensive use of officials in the Mississippi Department of Education. The director of the Division of Instruction and his staff served as liaison personnel in distributing, collecting, and processing accreditation information. This practice of "separate but equal" accreditation terminated in the summer of 1970 when the State Board of Education assumed the responsibility, thus adding a legal dimension to a voluntary process designed to improve schools.

The accreditation law of 1970 gave the State Board of Education the power and authority to prescribe the standards and procedures for the accreditation of schools and placed the responsibility for enforcement in the Mississippi Department of Education. The law further mandated the Board to appoint a Commission on School Accreditation, whose membership would consist of four representatives from each of the five Congressional districts and whose primary purpose would be to continually review the accreditation system. Contrary to the general perception of the public, the law did not make accreditation compulsory for any school. The process continued to be voluntary and open to any elementary, secondary, or special school in the state.

In the decade following the passage of the accreditation law of 1970, the accreditation system (although now legal) continued to emphasize quantitative factors (specific resources and personnel) as the means by which school improvement was to be accomplished. The provision of adequate resources and personnel was assumed to be a sufficient indicator of the quality of the school program, but, as accreditation information was evaluated, it was found that the quality of the school program was not a direct correlate of the required quantitative factors. However, the system was successful in assuring the presence of adequate resources and in standardizing the organization and operation of school programs. These assurances were not enough to soothe a growing disgruntled public which was constantly evaluating the products of accredited schools – its students. As the decade of the eighties approached, the state was set for reform in education and, ultimately, in school accreditation. The public wanted the emphasis in accrediting schools shifted from measures of quantity to those of quality.

The Education Reform Act of 1982 established a task force to develop a system for assuring the quality of school programs in Mississippi. This new system, appropriately deemed performance-based school accreditation, was based upon measures that focus on the extent to which schools help students master defined content and objectives. The law clearly shifted the emphasis in accreditation to the outcomes of education, specifically those related to student achievement, and changed the process from voluntary to compulsory for all public schools.

Legislation enacted in 1994 maintained the emphasis on student achievement and mandated that the Mississippi State Board of Education examine the performance-based accreditation system in order to strengthen and expand it. The 1994 legislation required the system to establish rigorous minimum standards; to establish levels above the minimum that demand exemplary performance; to establish strict measures for districts that fail to meet minimum standards; and to hold districts accountable for the educational progress of their students.

During the 1999 Legislative Session, the Mississippi Student Achievement Improvement Act of 1999 was passed requiring the State Board of Education to implement a performance-based accreditation system for both individual schools and school districts. This legislation also required the State Board of Education to set annual performance standards for each of the schools in the state and to measure the performance of each school against itself, using student growth and performance measures. Additional legislation passed in 2000 further clarified requirements for establishing new accountability standards, making accreditation levels reflective of student performance at the school level rather than the district level. This 2000

legislation required school accreditation levels to be based on two criteria: (1) meeting an annual growth expectation in student achievement and (2) the percentage of students proficient at grade level. This legislation also established an intensive assistance program for schools not meeting the accreditation standards. For the first time, all components of a school - students, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members - are held accountable for student learning.

ACCREDITATION POLICIES OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

1.0 ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

1.1 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION ON SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

The Commission is composed of fifteen (15) members, with three representatives from each Congressional district. The membership consists of two classroom teachers, two principals of schools, two school district superintendents, two local school board members, and seven individuals who are not actively engaged in the education profession. All appointments to the Commission shall comply with Section 37-17-3, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

1.2 APPOINTMENT

Each member of the Commission is appointed by the State Board upon recommendation of the State Superintendent of Education.

1.3 TERMS OF OFFICE

The length of a regular term is four years. Upon acceptance of appointment, each member is eligible to serve for two consecutive terms. If a member changes employment or accepts a position that is no longer reflective of the category for which he or she was appointed, or if a member moves out of the Congressional district he or she was appointed to represent, that member must resign and a new member will be appointed to fill the unexpired term. A member of the Commission who is appointed to fill an unexpired term is eligible for appointment to his or her own term of office.

1.4 GENERAL DUTIES OF COMMISSION

The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, shall establish and implement a permanent performance-based accreditation system, and all public elementary and secondary schools shall be accredited under this system. It shall be the purpose of the Commission on School Accreditation to continually review and enforce the standards on accreditation and to make recommendations to the State Board of Education.

1.5 OFFICERS

The Commission annually elects a chairperson and vice-chairperson.

1.6 MEETINGS

The Commission meets on call of the State Superintendent of Education. Any official action taken by the Commission requires the presence of a quorum, which is defined as a majority of the present membership. Superintendents of school districts will receive written notice of the place, time, and date of each Commission meeting. Individuals and/or groups who request a time slot on the agenda are required to submit such in writing to the executive secretary. All requests for agenda consideration must be received by the executive secretary no later than seven days prior to the meeting of the Commission. Agenda items received after this deadline may be added if approved by a majority vote of the Commission.

1.7 EXPENSES

According to Sections 25-3-41 and 25-3-69, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, each member of the Commission is reimbursed for per diem, travel, and other allowable expenses that are incurred when attending meetings of the Commission. The expenses are paid out of any funds available for the operation of the Mississippi Department of Education.

1.8 STAFF

Staff assigned to the Commission consists of personnel in the Mississippi Department of Education. The State Superintendent of Education designates one staff member to serve as executive secretary.

2.0 DISTRICT ACCREDITATION POLICY

The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, is required to establish and implement a process for accountability at the public school district level. School districts are held accountable for process standards and receive an annual *Accreditation Status*. Standards of the performance-based accreditation system recommended by the Commission and adopted by the State Board of Education are contained in the current edition of *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.

2.1 ASSIGNMENT OF DISTRICT LEVEL ACCREDITATION STATUSES

The Commission on School Accreditation determines the annual accreditation status of all public school districts based on compliance with process standards. Information concerning district compliance with process standards is reported to the Commission on an annual basis. Annual accreditation statuses are assigned in the fall of each school year and are based on verified accreditation data from the previous school year.

After the Commission takes action on accreditation records presented, the superintendent of the district is notified of the status assigned. The decision of the Commission is final unless appealed by the school board of the school district to the State Board of Education in accordance with the appeal procedures in section 5.4 of this document.

2.2 PROCESS STANDARDS

Process (input) standards address accepted educational principles and practices that are believed to promote educational quality. Any verified violation of a process standard is noted on the record of a school district at the time of discovery within any school year, but does not affect the current accreditation status of the district. (See following policy 2.5 for the exceptions.) If a noted violation of a process standard has not been corrected by the following school year when accreditation statuses are assigned, the violation is reported to the Commission for appropriate action.

2.3 ACCREDITATION STATUSES

2.3.1 ACCREDITED is assigned to a district that complies with 100% of the process standards.

2.3.2 ADVISED is assigned to a district that has process standards deficiencies. The district will be required to develop a corrective action plan to address the deficiencies.

2.3.3 WITHDRAWN is assigned to a district that has previously been on advised status and still does not comply with its corrective action plan.

2.4 NOTIFICATION OF DEFICIENCIES AFTER ASSIGNMENT OF STATUS

After the annual assignment of a district's accreditation status, the process of determining statuses for the following school year begins. When information on file in the Mississippi Department of Education indicates that a school district may be in violation of a standard, the superintendent of the district is informed in writing by appropriate staff in the Department responsible for monitoring compliance with the standard. School district officials are given thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of notification to provide a written response verifying accuracy or inaccuracy of the notice of possible noncompliance with the standard. The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, reserves the right to suspend school district compliance of any accreditation process standard that is not directly mandated by state or federal law.

If the written response includes appropriate evidence to correct or refute the alleged violation, the superintendent of the district is notified by appropriate staff in the Department responsible for monitoring compliance with the standard. Any verified violation of a standard is reported in writing to the Office of Accreditation, where it is noted on the current Accreditation Record Summary of the district. (See Glossary for definition of Accreditation Record Summary.) The appropriate staff member in the Office of Accreditation notifies the superintendent of the district

in writing of the verified violation. Although the accreditation status of the district may not be subject to change until the next assignment of annual district status, the superintendent is required to provide a written response specifying how and when the violation will be corrected.

2.5 FACTORS AFFECTING CHANGE IN ACCREDITATION STATUS

An assigned accreditation status may remain unchanged during that school year except in those cases where verified noncompliance with financial standards, the testing standard, or continued noncompliance with federal regulations may downgrade a status immediately or where correction of deficiencies in meeting process standards upgrades a level.

A district's accreditation status may also be affected if one of its schools continues to be designated as a Priority School after three (3) years of implementing a school improvement plan, or if more than fifty percent (50%) of the schools within the district are designated as Priority Schools in any one (1) year. (See policies under section 3.0.)

Action of the Commission is required in any case.

2.6 RESOLVING ACCREDITATION CONTROVERSIES

All controversies involving the accreditation statuses of school districts are initially heard by a duly authorized representative of the Commission in accordance with Section 37-17-5, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, and policy 5.0.

2.7 CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR TRANSFER OF GRADES

When two or more school districts consolidate or when two or more school boards approve the transfer of a grade or grades, the affected school district(s) may be allowed to maintain its accreditation status for a period of time to be determined upon application to the Commission on School Accreditation. The Commission on School Accreditation shall review the application of any such affected school district(s) and submit a recommendation to the State Board of Education for approval.

2.8 CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN AND WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

2.8.1 CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

When a school district has been assigned an ADVISED accreditation status, the Mississippi Department of Education, in conjunction with the school district, shall develop a corrective action plan that includes a time frame in which to correct the district's deficiencies. The State Board of Education implements the program of development in each ADVISED (probationary) district in accordance with Section 37-17-6(10)(a)-(e), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

2.8.2 WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

If the district's deficiencies are not removed during the time specified in the corrective action plan, the school district is subject to having its accredited status withdrawn by the Commission on School Accreditation. Upon declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor, the State Board of Education may take all such action for dealing with school districts as is authorized under subsection (11) or (14) of Section 37-17-6, including the appointment of an interim conservator. If the accreditation of the school district is withdrawn, the status of the district will be listed as Accreditation-WITHDRAWN and the record of that district will continue to be maintained.

In the event an individual school in the district continues to be designated a Priority School after three (3) years of implementing a school improvement plan, or in the event that more

than fifty percent (50%) of the schools within the school district are designated as Priority Schools in any one (1) year, the State Board of Education may request that the Governor declare a state of emergency in that school district. Upon declaration of the state of emergency by the Governor, the State Board of Education may take all such action for dealing with school districts as is authorized under subsection (11) or (14) of Section 37-17-6, including the appointment of an interim conservator.

2.8.2.1 HEARINGS

Before recommending that the State Board of Education withdraw the accredited status of a district, the Commission conducts a hearing to allow the officials of the affected district to present evidence or other reasons as to why the accredited status should not be withdrawn. All hearings before the Commission are recorded and transcribed.

2.8.2.2 RESULTS OF HEARINGS

Within forty-five (45) calendar days of the conclusion of the hearing, the Commission determines whether the accredited status of the district should be withdrawn. If the decision is made not to withdraw the accredited status of the district, a new timeline is established, contingent on approval by the State Board of Education. If the decision is made to withdraw the accredited status of the district, the State Board of Education reviews the record of the hearing and determines whether or not to approve the decision of the Commission. If the decision to withdraw accreditation is upheld by the State Board of Education, the Commission issues a request to the Governor that a state of emergency be declared in that district in accordance with Section 37-17-6(11), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

2.8.2.3 PUBLIC NOTICE

After a state of emergency has been declared, the Commission files a public notice at least once a week for at least three consecutive weeks in a newspaper published within the immediate or general vicinity of the affected school district in accordance with Section 37-17-6(12), *Mississippi Code of 1972,* as amended.

2.8.2.4 ACCESS TO SCHOOL DISTRICT RECORDS

School districts are required to produce necessary reports, correspondence, financial statements, and any other documents necessary for the Commission to implement this section on withdrawal of accreditation and conservatorship.

2.8.2.5 REINSTATEMENT OF AN ACCREDITED STATUS

Before a school district is reinstated as an accredited school district, the district will be visited by a committee appointed by the Commission.

3.0 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATION POLICY

The State Board of Education, acting through the Commission on School Accreditation, is required to establish and implement a process for accountability at the individual public school level. Individual schools are held accountable for student growth and performance and receive an annual *Performance Classification.*

3.1 ASSIGNMENT OF SCHOOL LEVEL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

The performance classification assigned to a school will be determined by (1) the percentage of

students at the school who are performing at a criterion level (e.g., proficient) and (2) the degree to which student performance has improved over time (based on an expected growth value for the school). All public elementary and secondary schools shall be assigned a performance classification. Information concerning school performance is reported to the Commission on an annual basis. Annual performance classifications will be assigned in the summer/fall of each school year.

3.2 PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Performance (output or product) standards address selected components of the statewide testing program and other outcome measures related to the performance of a school.

3.3 PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

3.3.1 Superior-Performing School
3.3.2 Exemplary-Growth School
3.3.3 Priority School
3.3.4 ***Other Designations to Follow

3.4 PRIORITY SCHOOLS

Following an analysis of school data each year, the Mississippi Department of Education shall identify those schools that are deficient in educating students and are in need of improvement. This analysis shall indicate individual school performance in two areas: meeting its assigned yearly growth expectation and percentage of the students in the school that are proficient.

3.4.1 DESIGNATION

A school shall be identified as needing assistance or as a Priority School if the school (a) does not meet its growth expectation and (b) has a percentage of students functioning below grade level, as designated by the State Board of Education.

3.4.2 NOTIFICATION

Within fifteen (15) days after a Priority School has been identified, written notice shall be sent by the State Board of Education by certified mail to the school principal, the superintendent, and the local board of education.

3.4.3 ASSIGNMENT OF EVAULATION TEAMS

Within fifteen (15) days after notification, the State Board of Education shall assign an evaluation team to the school. The evaluation team shall consist of a minimum of seven trained members appointed by the State Superintendent of Education and approved by the State Board of Education from the following categories: (a) school superintendents, (b) school principals, (c) curriculum coordinators, (d) at least two teachers, (e) local school board members, (f) community leaders, (g) parents, and (h) institutions of higher learning personnel. All evaluation team members shall be trained in the appropriate areas. After completing the evaluation of the Priority School, the team shall prepare and adopt its school evaluation report, which shall be submitted to the State Superintendent of Education for approval within forty-five calendar (45) days. Following the Superintendent's approval, the report shall be presented to the principal of the Priority School, the superintendent and school board members of the local school district, and the community served by the Priority School at an advertised public meeting.

3.4.4 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Based on the findings of the evaluation report and the results of the public meeting, the

Mississippi Department of Education and evaluation team leader shall assist the school principal and other local school officials in the development of a school improvement plan. A local parents/citizens advisory council shall be established by the evaluation team at the school to provide input and guidance into the development of the school improvement plan and its evaluation. The local parents/citizens advisory council shall consist of representatives from each of the following local groups: (a) five (5) representatives of the local PTA, PTSA, or other parent organization, (b) two (2) local elected officials or community activists, (c) two (2) students, (d) two (2) local business leaders. Persons who are employed by the local school district are not eligible for membership on the parents/citizens advisory council. The school improvement plan shall be developed and approved by the principal of the Priority School, the superintendent of the local school district, the local school board, and a majority of the teachers of the school.

3.4.5 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR EDUCATORS

As part of the school improvement plan for a Priority School, a professional development plan shall be prepared for those school administrators, teachers, or other employees who are identified by the evaluation team as needing improvement. The plan shall be prepared and implemented in accordance with Section 37-18-7, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

3.4.5.1 Teachers

A teacher deemed in need of professional development by the evaluation team shall be required to participate in a professional development plan. The plan will provide professional training and will be based on each teacher's specific needs and teaching assignments. The teacher's full participation in the professional development plan shall be required. This process shall be followed by a performance-based evaluation, which shall monitor the teacher's teaching skills and teaching behavior over a period of time. This monitoring shall include announced and unannounced reviews. Additionally, a teacher may be assigned a mentor who has demonstrated expertise as a high-performing teacher.

If, after one (1) year, the teacher fails to perform, the local administration shall reevaluate the teacher's professional development plan, make any necessary adjustments to it, and require participation in the plan for a second year. If, after the second year, the teacher fails to perform, the administration shall recommend and the local school board shall dismiss the teacher in a manner consistent with Section 37-9-59, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

3.4.5.2 Principals

If a principal is deemed to be in need of improvement by the evaluation team, a professional development plan shall be developed for the principal, and the principal's full participation in the professional development plan shall be a condition of continued employment. The plan shall provide professional training in the roles and behaviors of an instructional leader and shall offer training specifically identified for that principal's needs. The principal of a Priority School may be assigned mentors who have demonstrated expertise as exemplary-performing principals. The local school administration shall continue to monitor and evaluate all school personnel during this period, evaluate their professional development plans, and make personnel decisions as appropriate.

At the end of the second year, if a school continues to be a Priority School and a principal has been at that school for three (3) or more years, the administration shall recommend and the local school board shall dismiss the principal in a manner consistent with Section 37-9-59, and the State Board of Education may initiate the school district conservatorship process authorized under Section 37-17-6. If extenuating circumstances exist, such as the assignment of a principal at a Priority School for fewer than two (2) years, other options may be considered, subject to approval by the State Board of Education.

3.4.5.3 Superintendent

If the evaluation report reveals a school district central office problem, the superintendent of the school district having a Priority School shall be required to participate in a professional development plan. Additionally, the superintendent may be assigned mentors who are high-performing superintendents and have demonstrated expertise and knowledge of high-performing schools. The local school board will continue to evaluate the performance of the superintendent and his participation in a professional development plan, making appropriate revisions to the plan as needed.

If a school continues to be a Priority School after a second year, the local school board may (1) impose a cap on the superintendent's salary or (2) make any necessary adjustments to his professional development plan and require his continued participation in a plan.

If a school continues to be designated a Priority School after three (3) years of implementing a school improvement plan, the State Board of Education shall issue a written request with documentation to the Governor asking that the office of the superintendent of such school district is subject to recall, or if more than fifty percent (50%) of the schools within the school district are designated as Priority Schools in any one year, the State Board of Education may issue a written request with documentation to the Governor asking that the office of the superintendent of such school district is subject to recall. Upon declaration by the Governor, an elected superintendent shall stand for reelection and an appointed superintendent shall stand for reappointment as specified in Section 37-18-7(4)(c), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

3.4.5.4 School Board

If a school continues to be designated a Priority School after three (3) years of implementing a school improvement plan, the State Board of Education shall,or in the event that more than fifty (50%) of the schools within the school district are designated as Priority Schools, in any one (1) year the State Board of Education may, issue a written request with documentation to the Governor that the membership of the school board of such school district shall be subject to recall. Whenever the Governor declares that the membership of the school board shall be subject to recall, the county election commission or the local governing authorities, as the case may be, shall take action as specified in Section 37-18-7(5), *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

3.4.6 WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

In the event a school continues to be designated a Priority School after three (3) years of

implementing a school improvement plan, or in the event that more than fifty percent (50%) of the schools within the school district are designated as Priority Schools in any one (1) year, the State Board of Education may request that the Governor declare a state of emergency in that school district. Upon the declaration of the state of emergency by the Governor, the State Board of Education may take all such action for dealing with the school district as is authorized under subsection (11) or (14) of Section 37-17-6, including the appointment of an interim conservator.

Hearing Procedures are outlined in section 2.8.2.1 through 2.8.2.5.

4.0 ACCREDITATION MONITORING PROCEDURES

Staff in the Mississippi Department of Education continuously monitor school districts to verify compliance with applicable accreditation requirements and state and federal laws.

4.1 ON-SITE EVALUATIONS

The State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, or the Commission on School Accreditation has the authority to call for an on-site evaluation or investigation of a school district at any time. If deficiencies are found in meeting accreditation standards or state and federal laws, the superintendent is notified in writing and given thirty (30) days from the receipt of notification to provide a written response. The report of findings is filed in the current accreditation records in the Office of Accreditation.

4.2 INVESTIGATIVE EVALUATIONS (COMPLAINTS AGAINST DISTRICTS)

An investigative evaluation is conducted in a school district in response to a formal complaint. All formal complaints made against schools or districts must be submitted to the Office of Accreditation in writing and bear the signature of the individual(s) filing the complaint. The written complaint shall contain specific details concerning alleged violations. When the complaint is received, the superintendent is notified in writing of the nature of the complaint and informed that the district is subject to an unannounced audit to investigate the allegations. If the complaint addresses an area over which the Commission has no authority, the individual filing the complaint is notified. Procedures for conducting investigative audits are as follows:

4.2.1 The auditors may arrive in the district without prior notification.

4.2.2 The auditors inform the superintendent of the purpose of the audit and of the procedures to be followed.

4.2.3 The auditors discuss procedures with the principal of the school if appropriate.

4.2.4 The auditors use various methods to collect the data needed to verify or discredit the complaint, including examination of official records, interviews with school personnel, and observations.

4.2.5 Upon completion of the audit, the auditors compile a written report that is sent to the complainant, the superintendent, the chairman of the board, and the Commission.

4.3 SPECIAL TEST AUDITS

Reports regarding potential testing irregularities or test security violations are referred to the Office of Student Assessment. Such reports include statistical analyses of test data conducted after each test administration, self-reported incidents, third-party allegations regarding violations of testing requirements, and irregularities noted during test security audits. Regular test security audits may be conducted prior to, during, and following each test administration in order to promote the integrity and security of the Mississippi Assessment System. The Office of Student Assessment will

report to the Office of Accreditation each testing irregularity that has been verified as a violation of a testing requirement.

4.3.1 Self-reports or third-party allegations regarding testing irregularities may be either formal written reports (signed or unsigned) or verbal reports or complaints that may be made officially or anonymously and with or without documentary evidence.

4.3.2 If a third-party allegation addresses an area over which the State Board of Education has no authority, the individual filing the allegation will be notified.

4.3.3 A self-report or allegation must identify specific details concerning alleged violations of test security and/or testing irregularities in order to warrant an investigative audit.

4.3.4 Any statistical analysis that indicates a potential testing irregularity or test security violation will be reviewed and evaluated by staff in the Office of Student Assessment. If the review and evaluation of the statistical analysis indicate that further information is required in order to resolve or confirm the testing irregularity, the Office of Student Assessment may require that a school district investigate the potential irregularity and report its findings to the Office of Student Assessment. Any verified testing irregularity is reported to the Office of Accreditation for appropriate action.

4.3.5 Procedures for test security audits are as follows:

4.3.5.1 The auditor may arrive at the school without prior notification.

4.3.5.2 The auditor informs the school administrator of the purpose of the audit and of the procedures to be followed.

4.3.5.3 The auditor requests that the superintendent be notified that a test audit is in progress.

4.3.5.4 The auditor uses the same methods to collect data as described in policy 4.1.

4.3.5.5 The auditor reports the audit findings to the Office of Student Assessment. If the audit findings indicate that a testing irregularity has occurred, the Office of Student Assessment will notify the district superintendent. If the response from the superintendent does not resolve the irregularity, the irregularity is reported to the Office of Accreditation for appropriate action.

4.4 SUMMER PROGRAM AUDITS

Priority schools offering summer programs may be audited to verify information contained in the annual Summer School/Extended Year Report.

4.5 OTHER STATE/FEDERAL PROGRAM AUDITS/EVALUATIONS

When audits or evaluations of other state or federal programs reveal verified noncompliance with state or federal program regulations, the incidents of noncompliance are filed with the Office of Accreditation.

4.6 ANALYSIS AND VERIFICATION OF ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

Accreditation staff in the Mississippi Department of Education review annual personnel/accreditation information submitted by school districts. Staff compare this information with any other accreditation data on record and notify responsible officials of any inconsistency in reporting or any apparent deficiency in meeting standards. Personnel/Accreditation information may be verified through on-site visits.

5.0 HEARING AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

All controversies involving the accreditation of schools or school districts are initially heard by a duly authorized representative of the Commission before whom a complete record is made.

5.1 REQUEST FOR HEARING

The school board of a school district may request a hearing by filing written notice with the executive secretary of the Commission on School Accreditation within ten (10) calendar days of the written notification of the recommended Commission action.

5.2 AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMISSION

Upon receipt of the written request for hearing, the chairman of the Commission assigns, in writing, a duly authorized representative previously appointed by the Commission to hear the controversy.

5.3 HEARING PROCEDURES

5.3.1 The Commission's representative sets the time, place, and date for a hearing and notifies all parties of the time, place, and date of the hearing by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested. All parties may be represented by counsel at the expense of the party. The hearing is conducted in such a manner as to afford all parties a fair and reasonable opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence pertinent to the issues and to cross-examine witnesses presented by the opposing party. The Commission's representative may permit any portion of the evidence to be submitted in the form of depositions or affidavits; and in case affidavits are received, an opportunity to present counter-affidavits is provided.

5.3.2 It is the responsibility of each party at the hearing to secure the attendance of such witness or witnesses as the party deems necessary or appropriate; and any expense connected with the attendance of such witnesses is borne by the party responsible for the attendance of the witness.

5.3.3 In conducting the hearing, the Commission's representative is not bound by common law or by statutory rules of evidence or by technical or formal rules of procedure, provided, however, hearsay evidence, if admitted, is not the sole basis for the determination of facts by the Commission's representative.

5.3.4 After presentation by the executive secretary of the Commission regarding recommended action and policy in support thereof, the party filing the written notice of hearing has the burden of going forward with the evidence, and at the conclusion of the hearing the Commission's representative grants any party the opportunity to present a statement in such party's own behalf, either in person or by such party's attorney.

5.3.5 All hearings held before the Commission's representative are recorded and transcribed by a court reporter whose fees and costs of transcription are paid by the school district involved within forty-five (45) days after having been notified of such costs and fees by the Commission. Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the transcribed record of the hearing, the Commission's representative files a written recommendation to the Commission as to the resolution of the controversies. Upon consideration of the transcribed record and recommendation of its representative, the Commission makes its decision and notifies all parties in writing by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the Commission is final unless the school board of the school district involved elects to appeal to the State Board of Education. The school board of the school district may appeal to the State Board of Education by filing a written notice of appeal with the State Superintendent of Education within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of the decision of the Commission on School Accreditation.

5.4 APPEAL PROCEDURES

5.4.1 An appeal to the State Board of Education is on the record previously made before the Commission's representative or the Commission. Upon written application, the State Board of Education may consider new factual evidence.

5.4.2 Upon receipt of the transcript, the State Board of Education, through the State Superintendent of Education, notifies the parties involved that the transcript has been filed and that the appealing party has fifteen (15) calendar days within which to file any written argument not to exceed twenty-five (25) pages in length. The Commission is allowed thirty (30) calendar days from the filing of the transcript with the State Board of Education to file a responsive written argument not to exceed twenty-five (25) pages in length. Any written argument in rebuttal by the appealing party must be filed within forty (40) calendar days of the filing of the transcript. The appealing party may not exceed twenty-five (25) pages as the combined total for its original and rebuttal arguments. An original and nine (9) copies of the written argument must be provided. The State Board of Education considers all appeals within thirty (30) calendar days of the last written argument filed. The written decision of the State Board of Education is transmitted to the parties involved within fifteen (15) calendar days of its decision.

PROCESS STANDARDS

ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

1. School board members complete required basic and continuing education programs. {MS Code 37-3-4(5) and 37-7-306(1-4)}

2. School board policies that comply with state and federal statutes, rules, and regulations serve as the basis of operation for the district, and current copies of school board policies are published and available for public review.{MS Code 25-61-1 through 17; 37-9-1 through 75; 37-9-101 through 113; 37-7-301(p)(w); and Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964}

3. The school board assigns all executive and administrative duties to the superintendent, who is properly licensed and chosen in the manner prescribed by law. {MS Code 37-6-3(3-4); 37-9-7, 13, 14; 37-19-1(d); and 37-61-9}

4. The school district employs an appropriately licensed full-time principal at each school. {MS Code 37-9-7,15}

5. The school district employs in each school a licensed librarian or media specialist who devotes no more than one-fourth of the workday to library/media administrative activities. {MS Code 37-17-6(3)(a-e)}
   - 5.1 If the student enrollment is 499 or less, a half-time licensed librarian or media specialist is required.
   - 5.2 If the student enrollment is 500 or more, a full-time licensed librarian or media specialist is required.

6. Student support services (appraisal, academic, and/or personal advisement, and educational and/or career planning and referral) are provided in each high school by at least a half-time appropriately licensed guidance counselor. Students in elementary schools have access to student support services (as previously noted) provided by a counselor, social worker, nurse, or other student support personnel.

7. The school district employs a school business officer/administrator whose qualifications meet the criteria established by the Mississippi Department of Education and whose primary job responsibilities are conducting, supervising, and/or directing the financial affairs and operations of the school district. (SB Policy GBBA)

8. All district professional positions requiring licensed staff are filled by staff who are properly licensed and endorsed. {MS Code 37-9-7} **EXCEPTIONS**:
   - 8.1 The professional staff in each school is comprised of no more than 5% of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) units working outside the area or areas of endorsement. (An appropriate license is required for superintendents, principals, librarians, and high school guidance counselors.) {MS Code 37-3-2(6)(e-f)}
   - 8.2 Secondary teachers endorsed in an academic subject area may teach in their academic subject area in departmentalized elementary grades 5 and 6. (SB Policy DFB-1)
   - 8.3 Assistant principals and administrative interns who are not properly endorsed may be included in the 5% FTE working outside their area of endorsement, provided that they do not act in the place of the principal.

9. The school district implements a formal personnel appraisal system for licensed staff that includes assessment of employee on-the-job performance. {MS Code 37-3-46(b)}

10. The school district operates with a financial accounting system as prescribed by the State Auditor's Office. The most recent annual audit report of the school district, as conducted under the guidelines of the State Auditor's Office, indicates that the auditor has issued an unqualified opinion (as defined by generally accepted auditing standards) on the general purpose financial statements of the school district. {MS Code 37-9-18, 37-37-1, and 37-61-23}

    10.1 The board of education has implemented a fixed asset system of accountability that complies with the standards established by the State Auditor's Office for the verification of fixed assets and the auditing of fixed assets records. {MS Code 37-17-6(16)}

    10.2 The financial accounting data and the corresponding annual audit report as submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education reflect no less than a zero fund balance (as defined by generally accepted accounting principles) for all funds of the school district. {MS Code 37-61-9}

11. The board of education budgets and expends from the District Maintenance Fund (Fund #1120) a minimum of $20.00 per student for instructional/library supplies, materials, and equipment.

12. Funds available for classroom supplies, materials, and equipment from the Education Enhancement Fund (Fund #2440) are allotted and expended in compliance with Section 37-61-33, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, and State Board of Education Policy DFBI.

SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND CLIMATE

13. The school district complies with state law and State Board of Education policy on residency requirements {MS Code 37-15-29 and SB Policy JBCA}, immunization requirements {MS Code 37-7-301(i), 37-15-1, and 41-23-37}, and entry requirements. {MS Code 37-15-9}

14. Any transfer student from a school or program (correspondence, tutorial, or home study) not accredited regionally or by a state board of education [or its designee(s)] is given either a standardized achievement test(s) or teacher-made special subject test(s) to determine the appropriate classification of the student within 30 days after filing for transfer. Notice of the administering of such test(s) shall be given to the applicant not less than five days prior to the date of the administration of such test. {MS Code 37-15-33}

15. Permanent records and cumulative folders for individual students contain all required data and are collected, maintained, and disseminated in compliance with state law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, and the Confidentiality Section of P. L. 94-142. (See Appendix E) {MS Code 37-15-1 through 3}

16. The school district engages in planning to review the educational status of the district and to address
specific actions relative to accreditation and performance separately.

17. The school district implements procedures for monitoring and reporting student absences as specified in the Mississippi Compulsory Attendance Law. {MS Code 37-13-91}

18. The school district implements programs designed to keep students in school and to lower student dropout rates. {MS Code 37-3-46(c)}

19. There is an organized system to encourage community involvement, parental communication, and business partnerships in school district decision making. {MS Code 37-7-337}

20. The academic year provides a minimum of 180 teaching days that meet the following criteria: {MS Code 37-13-61 through 69 and 37-19-1(h)}

    20.1 The opening date of the school year for students is scheduled no earlier than August 1 and the closing date no later than June 15. {MS Code 37-13-61}(SB Policy AEA)

    20.2 The teaching day must provide at least 330 minutes of instruction per day or 27.5

hours per five-day week. The school district must ensure that during the academic school year a minimum of 140 hours of instruction is provided for each Carnegie unit of credit offered. {MS Code 37-13-67}

20.3 Two of the 180 days may be 60% days, provided that there are 198 minutes of actual instruction or testing and the remainder of each day is used for professional development or other activities related to instruction.

20.4 The school district schedules preparation for graduation ceremonies in such manner that graduating seniors are absent from classes for no more than three days prior to the end of the school year (177 days).

20.5 The summer school/extended year program meets all applicable requirements of the regular school program. {MS Code 37-3-49}

- Students from other schools enrolled in summer programs provide written approval from the principal of their home schools.
- Students enrolled in an extended year program complete all remaining course/subject requirements/objectives before credit for the course/subject is issued.
- Students enrolled in a summer program are limited to earning one Carnegie unit of credit during the summer school session.

21. The school district requires each student, in order to receive a high school diploma, to have met the requirements established by its local board of education and by the State Board of Education. {MS Code 37-16-7} (SB Policy IHF-1 and 2)

22. Each student receiving a standard diploma has earned a minimum of 20 Carnegie units. (See Appendix A.) (SB Policy ICFA-1)

22.1 Each student receiving a standard diploma has achieved a passing score on each of the required high school exit examinations. {MS Code-37-16-7}(SB Policy IIB-1)

22.2 Each student who has completed the secondary curriculum for special education may be issued a special diploma or certificate of completion which states: "This student has successfully completed an Individualized Education Program." {MS Code 37-16-11}

22.3 The student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in the graduation exercises.

Note: Carnegie units will be awarded for Algebra I and Computer Discovery taken in the eighth grade.

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

23. The school district is in compliance with state and/or federal requirements for the following programs:

23.1 Early Childhood Programs (kindergarten and teacher assistant) {MS Code 37-21-1 et. Seq.} (SB Policy IDAC)

23.2 Vocational-Technical Education {MS Code 37-31-1 et. seq.} (SB Policies CT, DCK, DFBC, ECK, FJ, GBEA, IDAA, IL, JHF and Federal Code)

23.3 Special Education {MS Code 37-23-1 through 9} (SB Policies IDDF and Federal Code)

23.4 Child Nutrition {MS Code 37-11-7}(SB Policies EE and EEH and Federal Code)

23.5 Improving America's School Act: Titles I, II, IV, and VI (IDDBB 2 , 3 and Federal Code)
23.6 Technology in the Classroom {MS Code 37-151-19(3)} (SB Policy IM)
23.7 Driver Education {MS Code 37-25-1 et. seq.} (SB Policy IDDE)
23.8 Pre-Kindergarten (Refer to the ***Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum.***)
23.9 Mississippi Curriculum Content Assessment System (See Appendix F.) {MS Code 37-16-1 through 4} {SBE Policy IIB-1, 3-6 and IHF-1 and 2}
23.10 Transportation Program {MS Code 37-41-53} (SB Policies ED-3, JGG-1, and IDDE)
23.11 School Safety Plan, including facilities that are clean, safe, and equipped to meet the instructional needs of students and staff {MS Code 37-3-81, 37-7-301(c)(d)(j), 37-11-5 and 49, 37-17-6(2), and 45-11-10}

24. The school district meets the following requirements for library-media services:
24.1 Each school has a library-media center with an organized collection of materials and equipment that represents a broad range of current learning media, including instructional technology.
24.2 The library staff offers a systematic program of service to students and staff by providing access to the materials and equipment, by providing instruction in the use of the materials and equipment, and by working with teachers and other staff members to provide learning activities for the students.

25. The school district provides each student with appropriate equipment and laboratory experiences to meet the instructional requirements of the science program. (See ***Mississippi Science Framework, 2001.***)

26. The school district provides each student in each school with current or otherwise appropriate textbooks that are in good condition. {MS Code 37-43-1, 37-9-14(2)(b), and 37-7-301(ff)}

27. The school district implements an instructional management system that has been adopted by the school board and that includes, at a minimum, the competencies required in the curriculum frameworks approved by the State Board of Education. {MS Code 37-3-49}

28. The district follows an established board policy that defines criteria for the academic promotion/progression/retention of students. *Such criteria prohibit the retention of students for extracurricular purposes.

***Note: This portion of the standard will be jointly monitored and enforced by the State Board of Education and the Mississippi High School Activities Association.**

29. The school district provides an alternative education and/or GED program for the categories of students identified in MS Code 37-13-92, and the program meets the guidelines established by the State Board of Education. (See ***Guidelines for Alternative/GED School Programs.***)

30. Suggested teaching strategies, resources, and assessment strategies are available to teachers in each school for selection and use in teaching the required competencies. {MS Code 37-3-49}

31. Each classroom teacher, excluding vocational teachers whose class periods exceed 50 minutes, has an unencumbered period of time during the teaching day to be used for individual or departmental planning.

31.1 If the school utilizes a traditional six-period or seven-period day schedule, the instructional planning time provided for secondary teachers is a minimum of 225 minutes per week, exclusive of lunch period. If the school utilizes any form of a modular/block schedule, the instructional planning time provided is a minimum of either 225 minutes per week or an

average of 225 minutes per week per instructional cycle, exclusive of lunch period.

31.2 Instructional planning time for the elementary school teacher is no less than 150 minutes per week, exclusive of lunch period.

32. Individual teachers (grades 9-12) are limited to three course preparations per day or four at the discretion of the teacher.

33. The basic curriculum of each high school consists of required and approved courses that generate at least 32 Carnegie units annually. (See Appendices B and C.) {MS Code 37-1-3(2)}(SB Policy ICFA-1)

Note: Any request for exemption from teaching the courses listed in Appendix B must be approved by the Commission on School Accreditation.

34. The basic curriculum of each elementary or middle school (any configuration of grades K-8) consists of reading/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and physical education, which may be taught by a regular classroom teacher. {MS Code 37-1-3(2)}

35. In kindergarten through grade 4 student teacher ratios do not exceed the following:

35.1 Student teacher ratios do not exceed 22 to 1 in kindergarten, except in instances in which a full-time assistant teacher is in the classroom. If a full-time assistant teacher is employed, 27 may be enrolled.

35.2 Student teacher ratios do not exceed 27 to 1 in classrooms serving grades 1 through 4 unless approved by the State Board of Education. {MS Code 37-19-5(1)} (SB Policy IEC)

36. Student teacher ratios do not exceed 30 to 1 in self-contained classes serving grades 5-8.

37. Student teacher ratios do not exceed 33 to 1 in departmentalized academic core classes serving grades 5-12.

38. The total number of students taught by an individual teacher in academic core subjects at any time during the school year shall not exceed 150, unless approved by the State Board of Education. {MS Code 37-19-5(1)} (SB Policy IEC)

Note: A teacher who provides instruction through intra-district or inter-district distance learning will be exempt from the 150-student limitation. A lab facilitator or principal designee will be responsible for the assignment of grades and related activities at the receiving school.

DEVELOPING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS
A WORK IN PROGRESS

INTRODUCTION

Mississippi is currently developing a new accountability system to improve student achievement and increase the level of accountability for both school districts and individual schools. The new accountability system will focus on student achievement at each individual school. Performance standards will be established for individual schools, and assessment data from the statewide assessment system will be used to determine school performance classifications.

ANALYSIS OF SENATE BILL 2488

The framework for developing and implementing the new accountability system was established in legislation enacted during the 2000 legislative session. Senate Bill 2488 established the following criteria for developing new school performance and accountability standards.

- The State Board of Education (SBE) shall establish, design, and implement a Superior-Performing Schools Program and an Exemplary Schools Program for identifying and rewarding public schools that improve. Upon full implementation of the statewide testing program, **Superior-Performing, Exemplary, or Priority School designation** shall be made by the SBE as follows:

    1. **Growth Expectation.** A growth expectation will be established by testing students annually and, using a psychometrically approved formula, by tracking their progress. This growth expectation will result in a **composite score each year for each school**.

    2. **Percentage of Students Proficient in Each School.** A determination will be made as to the percentage of students proficient in each school. The definition of proficiency shall be developed for each grade, based on a demonstrated range of performance in relation to content as reflected in the ***Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks***. This range of performance must be established through a formal procedure including educators, parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders.

- A school has two methods for designation as either a Superior-Performing or an Exemplary School, to be determined on an annual basis:

    1. a school **exceeds its growth expectation** by a percentage established by the SBE; or

    2. a school **achieves the grade level proficiency standard** established by the SBE.

- A school shall be identified as a Priority School and needing assistance if the school

    1. does not meet its established growth expectations; and

    2. has a percentage of students functioning below grade level, as designated by the SBE.

- Any school designated as a Priority School which exceeds its growth expectation by a percentage established by the SBE shall no longer be considered a Priority School.

WHAT IS STILL TO BE DETERMINED

As additional assessment data are available for review, many decisions will be determined concerning the new accountability model and the establishment of performance standards for individual schools. Prior to finalizing recommendations for establishing new performance standards and assigning performance classifications for individual schools, the following areas will need to be addressed:

School Performance Standards

- Develop procedures for combining proficiency levels across subject areas to yield an overall proficiency level for a student.

- Establish reasonable standards for school level performance.

- What is the minimum percentage of students that should score in the proficient and advanced levels for a school to be classified as a Superior-Performing School?

- What is the minimum percentage of students that should be proficient for a school to be classified as a Priority School?

Growth Model. Develop procedures for combining developmental scale score values across grade levels and subject areas to yield meaningful school level composite values that can be used in a growth model.

Growth Expectations. Develop procedures for computing reasonable growth expectations for individual schools.

- How much growth should be expected in the composite value at each school for it to be assigned to a classification other than Priority School?

- How much should a school grow beyond its expectation to be classified as an Exemplary-Growth School?

Student Participation. Establish criteria for determining which students will be included in the accountability model at each school.

- Establish a policy concerning the length of time that a student would be enrolled in a school for assessment data to be included for that school.

- Develop procedures for including information on students with disabilities and ELL/LEP students in the accreditation model. Many of these students will have been assessed using instructional level testing or alternate assessments.

Schools That Have No Data at Grades Three through Eight

- Develop procedures to assess school level performance and growth at the secondary level for grades 9-12.

- Develop performance standards for schools serving students in kindergarten through second grade.

Other Issues

- Determine other appropriate variables that might be used within the accreditation model to measure student improvement (e.g., dropout rate, graduation rate, etc.).

TIMELINE

Pending full implementation of the Mississippi Curriculum Content Assessment System, the date to assign school performance classifications has been established by the State Board of Education as September 2003. Recommendations for establishing new performance standards and assigning performance classifications for individual schools cannot be finalized until sufficient assessment data are available for review and all issues outlined above have been addressed.

APPENDIX A
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Each student graduating from a secondary school in an accredited school district will have earned the required Carnegie units as specified in the following tables. Contents of each required and elective course must include the core objectives identified in the ***Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.*** Course titles and identification numbers must appear in the current edition of ***Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi*** published by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. (SB Policy ICFA-1) Enrollment in on-line and correspondence courses listed in this book must have prior approval granted by the principal. No more than one (1) of the minimum required number of units may be earned through completion of an approved correspondence course. Elective courses that do not have identified content in the ***Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks*** or whose titles do not appear in the current edition of ***Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi*** must be approved according to criteria stated in Appendix D.

CURRICULUM AREA	UNITS	REQUIRED SUBJECTS
ENGLISH	4	
MATHEMATICS	3	Algebra I Geometry
SCIENCE	3[1]	Biology I
SOCIAL STUDIES	3	1 World History 1 U.S. History ½ U.S. Government ½ Mississippi Studies[2]
HEALTH	½	Comprehensive Health *or* Family and Individual Health
BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY	1[3]	½ Keyboarding ½ Computer Applications
THE ARTS	1	
ELECTIVES	4 ½[4]	
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED	20	

[1] One unit may be in Technology Applications or Introduction to Agriscience or Agriscience I or Concepts of Agriscience or Allied Health or Aquaculture.

[2] The credit earned for a State/Local Government course in any other state by an out-of-state transfer student who enters after the sophomore year can stand in lieu of Mississippi Studies or Mississippi State and Local Government.

[3] One unit in Computer Discovery is accepted in lieu of the two ½ unit courses. Evidence of proficiency in Keyboarding and Computer Applications is accepted in lieu of the required courses if the student earns one unit in any of the courses listed in the ***Business and Technology Framework*** (academic and vocational).

[4] Beginning with 2000-2001 seniors, the limitations have been removed for elective units in band, physical education, and choral music. Elective units in physical education include participation in interscholastic athletic activities that meet the instructional requirements specified in the ***Fitness through Physical Education Framework*** and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

APPENDIX B
REQUIRED COURSES
IN THE CURRICULUM OF EACH SECONDARY SCHOOL

CURRICULUM AREA	COURSES	UNITS	TOTAL UNITS
ENGLISH	English I English II English III English IV	1 1 1 1	4
MATHEMATICS	Algebra I Algebra II Geometry Pre-Algebra Elective Math Courses	1 1 1 1 2	6
SCIENCE	Biology I Chemistry Physics Physical Science Elective Science Courses	1 1 1 1 2	6
SOCIAL STUDIES	U.S. History U.S. Government Mississippi Studies World History Economics *or* Intro to Geography	1 ½ ½ 1 ½	3 ½
BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY	Computer Applications[5] Keyboarding[1]	½ ½	1
HEALTH	Comprehensive Health[6]	½	½
THE ARTS	Any approved 500.00 course	1	1
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE	Family Dynamics	½	½
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	Any combination of courses[7]	4	4
ELECTIVES	Foreign Language (IHL) *or* Advanced World Geography (IHL)	1	5 ½
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED			32

[1] Or one unit in Computer Discovery.

[2] Family and Individual Health may be offered in lieu of Comprehensive Health.

[3] Includes Agriculture; Business Technology; Cooperative and Marketing Education; Family and Consumer Sciences; Health Education; Home Economics; Lodging and Hospitality; Technology Education; and Trade and Industrial.

APPENDIX C

REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION TO PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN MISSISSIPPI (IHL)

CURRICULUM AREA	COURSES	UNITS
ENGLISH		4
MATHEMATICS	Algebra I[1] Geometry Algebra II	3
SCIENCE	SELECT 3 UNITS FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST: Biology Advanced Biology Chemistry Advanced Chemistry Physics Advanced Physics Physical Science	3 (2 lab-based)
SOCIAL STUDIES	U.S. History World History U.S. Government (½) Economics (½) *or* Geography (½)	3
COMPUTER EDUCATION	Computer Applications	½
ADVANCED ELECTIVES	SELECT 2 UNITS[2] FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST: Foreign Language[1] World Geography 4th year lab-based Science 4th year Mathematics	2
TOTAL UNITS REQUIRED		**15 ½**

[1] Algebra I or first year Foreign Language taken in the eighth grade will be accepted for admission, provided course content is the same as the high school course.

[2] One of the two units must be in Foreign Language or World Geography.

APPENDIX D

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Courses that are to be offered above the minimum required Carnegie units and that are not listed in the current edition of ***Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi,*** as provided for in State Board of Education Policy ICFA-1, must meet the criteria outlined in 1.0 through 5.0 below in order to qualify for credit toward graduation. **However, in the event that the local school district wishes to implement a course that is nationally or regionally recognized, then the Office of Curriculum and Instruction may approve that course for use in that district for one year by meeting the following conditions:**

- **the course has a well-defined curriculum and the local school district wishes to implement the course on a pilot basis;**
- **the local board of education has approved that implementation for one year; and**
- **the appropriate Mississippi Department of Education office agrees with the district request.**

During that year, appropriate MDE staff will visit the district and review the course implementation. If the course clearly meets the intent of the course development requirements (1.0 through 5.0), then it may be recommended for continued use in the district. If it does not meet the requirements, it will not be approved a second year. However, it may be submitted by the district under the criteria for course approval (1.0 through 5.0).

The required information must be attached to the application. Each required attachment should be marked with the appropriate reference number. Omission of any of this information will cause this application to be returned to the district for revisions and resubmitted prior to the October deadline date in order for the course to be considered.

1.0 Definitions

1.1 Course - an organized set of competencies and suggested objectives within an academic discipline offered for a period of time (semester or school year) for which a student receives academic credit.

1.2 Developmental course - a course designed to be taught in any grade 7-12 (or any combination of grades 7-12 served within a school) that does not appear as an approved course in the current edition of ***Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi*** published by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction but is in the approval-seeking process as initiated by said school district to be taught in said school district.

2.0 Preliminary Approval Criteria

2.1 A district must have the approval of the local school board before submitting a course to the Commission for approval.

2.2 Courses must not be alternatives or replacements for any
- State Board of Education basic course requirements (Appendix B) or graduation requirements (Appendix A) or
- Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning student admission requirements (Appendix C).

2.3 Courses submitted for approval must meet during the teaching day.

3.0 Application/Approval Procedure/Adoption

3.1 Application for approval of local developmental courses must be made by the third Monday of October.

3.2 Applications will be reviewed according to preliminary criteria listed in 2.0 and content criteria listed in 4.0.

3.3 By December 31 the Office of Curriculum and Instruction will notify districts of the status of the course.

3.4 Approval for local developmental courses will be a one-year process, commencing with the beginning of the next school year following approval.

3.5 At the conclusion of the school year, a summative evaluation is required (deadline June 30).

4.0 Application Content

4.1 Application for local developmental course approval will be made on forms provided by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. The application will include the following:

- 4.1.1 Course title
- 4.1.2 Academic discipline(s)
- 4.1.3 Required teacher licensure
- 4.1.4 Pre-requisite courses for enrollment
- 4.1.5 Carnegie unit credit for course
- 4.1.6 Grade levels to be served
- 4.1.7 Number of minutes per day/week instruction is to be given
- 4.1.8 Budget

4.2 The instructional management plan for the developmental course will be submitted and must contain the following:

- 4.2.1 Course design - The course design will indicate the content of the course.
- 4.2.2 Course description - The course description will adhere to the format of the current discipline framework for which the course is being submitted. Failure to do so will result in the application being returned to the district for revisions and the application must be resubmitted prior to the deadline date. The description will consist of the following:
  - Competencies/Strand objectives
  - Suggested objectives/Content objectives
  - Suggested student and teacher activities
  - Suggested assessment strategies
  - Resources
- 4.2.3 Course evaluation plan - The evaluation plan will include how the district will determine the success of and need for the course during the pilot period (year one).

4.3 A written narrative detailing the following will be submitted:

- 4.3.1 Why the course is being initiated
- 4.3.2 How the needs assessment was conducted
- 4.3.3 How many people responded to the needs assessment

4.4 Projected expenditure budget for this course for one fiscal year. (Detailed costs should include equipment, supplies, etc.)

5.0 Curriculum Structure Validation

5.1 At the end of the pilot year, the school district will submit a final summative evaluation report to the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, no later than June 30.

5.2 Upon receipt of the final evaluation report, the course will be reviewed to determine if it should be recommended for continued use. The following will be considered:

- 5.2.1 Course information appears complete and accurate.
  - 5.2.1.1 Major purpose of course is clearly stated and appropriate.
  - 5.2.1.2 Competencies are indicated and appropriate.
  - 5.2.1.3 Objectives that were added or deleted as a result of evaluation data are indicated.
- 5.2.2 Course activities are complete.
  - 5.2.2.1 Competencies/Strand objectives are defined.
  - 5.2.2.2 Suggested objectives/Content objectives are defined.
  - 5.2.2.3 Suggested student and teacher strategies are appropriate.
  - 5.2.2.4 Suggested assessment strategies are appropriate.
  - 5.2.2.5 Appropriate resources are given.

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES

Deadline Date: Third Monday in October

1.0 General Information

All developmental courses offered in Mississippi school districts must be approved by the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. School districts seeking approval to offer a course not listed in the ***Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi*** must (1) **complete this application**, (2) **attach required documents**, and (3) **comply with the criteria and requirements** prior to the October deadline date.

2.0 School District Information of Compliance with Section 2.0, Appendix D, *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.*

District Name: _____

Address _____

_____

_____

School Name(s): _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

School Phone: _____ District Phone: _____

Contact person regarding this application: _____

Title: _____ Phone Number: _____

I affirm that _____ School District meets the
(Name of School District)
preliminary approval criteria for submission of a developmental course for approval listed in Section 2.0, Appendix D, *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards.*

_____ _____
(Superintendent's Signature) (Date)

3.0 Application will be reviewed according to preliminary criteria listed in 2.0 and content criteria listed in 4.0, Appendix D, *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards*.

4.0 Application Content: The following information must be attached to this application. Please mark each required attachment with the appropriate reference number. Omission of any of this information will cause this application to be returned to the district for revisions prior to the October deadline date in order for the course to be considered.

4.1 Course Information:

4.1.1 Course title:_____

4.1.2 Academic discipline(s) to which course is assigned (i.e., English, social studies):

_____

4.1.3 Required teacher licensure code for this course: _____

4.1.4 Pre-requisite course(s): _____

4.1.5 Carnegie unit credit: _____

4.1.6 Grade level(s) to be served: _____
(List all that apply.)

4.1.7 Number of classes per week: _____

Number of minutes per class per week: _____

4.1.8 Budget (one fiscal year) Total:_____

4.2 The instructional management plan for the developmental course includes the following framework format:

4.2.1 Course design-course content

4.2.2 Course description

- Competencies/Strand objectives
- Suggested objectives/Content objectives
- Suggested student and teacher activities
- Suggested assessment strategies
- Resources

4.2.3 Course evaluation plan (evaluation plan will include how the district will determine the success of and need for the course)

4.3 A written narrative detailing the following:

4.3.1 Why the course is being initiated

4.3.2 How the needs assessment was conducted

4.3.3 How many people responded to the needs assessment

4.4 Projected expenditure budget for this course for one fiscal year.

Send the completed application and required attachments to: Director, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Mississippi Department of Education, Post Office Box 771, Suite 230, Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771.

Application Deadline: Third Monday in October

APPENDIX E

STUDENT RECORDS

1. Student records are collected, maintained, and disseminated as required by Sections 37-15-1 through 37-15-3, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, 20 USC Section 1231, and the Confidentiality Section of Public Law 94-142.

2. Permanent records are kept in perpetuity for every person who has enrolled or is enrolled in a school.

3. The permanent record contains (a) legal name and address of the student, (b) date of birth as verified by birth certificate, (c) courses taken and grades or proficiency level earned, (d) immunization record, (e) date of withdrawal or graduation, (f) social security number {optional}, (g) record of performance on the required graduation tests, and (h) any other information determined by the State Board of Education.

4. Active permanent records are maintained in a secure and fire-resistant location in each school until the student withdraws or graduates, at which time the record may be transferred and/or placed on photographic film or microfilm in a central, fire-resistant depository.

5. Cumulative records are maintained for each student currently enrolled in a school.

6. The cumulative record (folder) contains the same information as the permanent record, as well as results of standardized tests and other information required by school board policies or prescribed by the State Board of Education.

7. Active cumulative records are maintained in a secure, fire-resistant location in each school.

8. Cumulative records of students who transfer or who are promoted to another school within or outside the district are to be sent to the head of the school to which the student transfers.

9. Cumulative records may be destroyed by order of the school board of the school district in not less than five years after the permanent record of the student has become inactive and has been transferred to the central depository of the district.

10. Permanent and active cumulative records of any school (public or nonpublic) that closes are transferred to the central depository of the school district wherein the closed school is located.

For further clarification or information see the current edition of the ***Manual of Directions for Using Mississippi's Cumulative Folders and Permanent Records.***

APPENDIX F

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MISSISSIPPI CURRICULUM CONTENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

I. PURPOSE

It is the policy of the State Board of Education that all test procedures and results that are used in the Performance Based Accreditation System be valid and accurate for making related decisions. In order to protect the security and integrity of all tests administered through the Mississippi Curriculum Content System, as well as to ensure reporting of accurate assessment results, the State Board of Education establishes the following requirements and the consequences applied when a school district or school is found in violation of any requirement. These requirements are established under the authority granted in Sections 37-16-1, 37-16-3, and 37-16-4, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

II. DEFINITIONS

Secure test materials include certain test administrator manuals, test booklets, completed answer documents, and other materials as specified by the Office of Student Assessment.

A *possible testing irregularity* is any incident in the test handling or administration that leads to a question regarding the security of the test or the accuracy of the test data.

A *verified testing irregularity* is a violation of a testing requirement.

III. REQUIREMENTS

The following is not an exhaustive list of requirements.

1. The District Test Coordinator or a designated representative of the school district shall attend applicable training sessions sponsored by the Office of Student Assessment.

2. A test security plan is prepared each year.

    a. The test security plan contains all components as required by the Office of Student Assessment.
    b. The test security plan is signed by the district superintendent and the chairman of the school board.
    c. The test security plan identifies **all** individuals who have access to the secure storage area.

3. Except during actual test administration, secure test materials are kept under lock and key, and access to secure test materials is limited to those identified in the test security plan as responsible for their security.

   a. Secure test materials are kept in locked storage before testing at both the district and school level.
   b. Access to secure test materials is limited to those identified in the test security plan.
   c. Test materials are not to be removed from security packaging prior to the time indicated on instructions from the Office of Student Assessment.
   d. Secure test materials are kept in locked storage after testing at both the district and school level unless otherwise directed by the Office of Student Assessment.

4. All secure test materials are accounted for before, during, and after testing as specified in the district's Test Security Plan.

   a. All secure test materials are accounted for before testing at the district level.
   b. All secure test materials are accounted for before testing at the school level.
   c. Test administrators account for all secure test materials before students are allowed to leave the testing room.
   d. All secure test materials are accounted for after testing at the school level.
   e. All secure test materials are accounted for after testing at the district level.
   f. If supplementary materials, such as scratch paper, maps, and manipulatives are provided, procedures for disposal are outlined in the test security plan and followed.

5. Any person involved in any phase of the testing program has been trained in appropriate assessment administration and test security procedures.

   a. The district conducts separate professional development training on proper assessment administration procedures and test security for all individuals involved in the handling and administration of each test.
   b. The district maintains complete records of all professional development related to assessment.
   c. The district has documentation that training related to assessment included information on test security violations and the consequences of violations.

6. Both a test administrator and a proctor are present during the entire test administration. The term "entire administration" means from the time that testing materials are distributed to the students until each student has completed the test and all test materials have been collected from the students.

7. Students are not allowed access to test questions prior to testing and are not allowed access to answers at any time.

8. Reproducing (by any means) all or any portion of any secure test material is prohibited.

9. Coaching students during testing, altering responses, or interfering with responses in any way is prohibited.

10. All eligible students are tested. (See also ***Mississippi Assessment System Exclusions and Accommodations*** concerning student eligibility.) (SB Policy IIB-3) {MS Code 37-16-3(2)}

    a. Accurate exclusions, absences, and other required data are compiled for each test for each school.
    b. Exclusions and absences data for each test for each school are submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education.

11. Only appropriate allowable testing accommodations are provided for students as specified in ***Mississippi Assessment System Exclusions and Accommodations***. (SB Policy IIB-3)

12. Makeup testing is provided for students who are absent during the regularly scheduled test administration.

13. Tests are administered according to the schedule published by the Office of Student Assessment.

14 Test materials are returned according to the schedule published by the Office of Student Assessment.

15. Test administrators and proctors keep written records of any testing irregularities occurring during testing and report these to appropriate school district officials who then report to the Mississippi Department of Education.

16. The superintendent of the district investigates all reports of alleged violations of test security and/or potential testing irregularities and submits a report of findings to the Mississippi Department of Education.

17. In analyzing data, no significant similar or identical patterns of responses are noted.

18. No statistically significant group scores that are inconsistent with established patterns of achievement are noted.

IV. INVESTIGATION

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) follows a systematic procedure to ensure that all evidence indicating possible testing irregularities is investigated. Corrective action will be taken when warranted. Following each test administration, there will be a review that focuses on identification of testing irregularities.

A. PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATION

Identifying and investigating possible testing irregularities involves a variety of data sources. These include formal testing audits, self-reports of testing irregularities, allegations/complaints related to possible testing irregularities, and results of several analyses and reports designed to identify possible testing irregularities from the test data.

The flowchart on page 38 illustrates the sources of data and the procedure used in notifying districts of possible testing irregularities, in determining whether each testing irregularity is resolved or verified, and in notification of any verified testing irregularities.

The procedure for handling testing irregularities is repeated twice a year: once for tests administered during the fall and once for the tests administered during the spring. The Office of Student Assessment will notify the school district in writing when a possible testing irregularity has been identified. Within fifteen days from receipt of the written notice identifying a possible testing irregularity, the district will submit a written response to the Office of Student Assessment. The Office of Student Assessment reserves the right to conduct an independent investigation. The Office of Student Assessment will evaluate the district response to determine if the possible testing irregularity has been resolved or if a testing irregularity has been verified. If the possible testing irregularity has been resolved, then the Office of Student Assessment will notify the district that no further action is required.

If a testing irregularity has been verified, then the Office of Student Assessment will notify the school district. Each testing irregularity that has been verified as a violation of a testing requirement will be reported to the Office of Accreditation and will be further evaluated by the Office of Student Assessment to determine if the violation may have jeopardized the security and integrity of the test(s) or the accuracy of the test results.

In the case of any verified testing irregularity, the Office of Student Assessment will report the irregularity to the Office of Accreditation for appropriate action and follow-up. (See ***CONSEQUENCES***.)

B. PROCEDURES FOR PERSONAL MISCONDUCT INVESTIGATION

If an irregularity that represents misconduct or other breaches of test security on the part of district personnel within a school district is identified, the superintendent of the district will be notified of the irregularity. It is the responsibility of the district to conduct an investigation into the allegation and report findings to the Office of Student Assessment. If the Office of Student Assessment concludes that the irregularity was resolved, the district is notified that no further action is necessary. If the Office of Student Assessment concludes that the irregularity was verified, the district is notified that the Office of Accreditation is being apprised of the finding.

The district attorney may investigate allegations of violations of test security on his own initiative following receipt of allegations, at the request of a school district, or at the request of the Mississippi Department of Education.

After a conviction, the personnel in question will be notified in writing that the evidence of conviction will be presented to the Commission on Educator Licensure and

that the Commission is required to take action pursuant to the authority granted in Section 37-16-4, *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended.

V. CONSEQUENCES

A. LETTER OF WARNING

If a violation has been verified that did not result in a substantial probability that the security, accuracy, or validity of the test results has been jeopardized, then the Office of Student Assessment may issue a letter of warning to the school and/or district and submit a copy of the letter to the Office of Accreditation to be placed in the district or school file. Multiple or repeated minor violations will result in a recommendation for a citation placed on the accreditation record. (See B below.)

B. CITATION PLACED ON THE ACCREDITATION RECORD

If a violation has been verified that resulted in a substantial probability that the security, accuracy, or validity of the test results has been jeopardized, then the Office of Student Assessment will issue written notification of the violation to the school and/or district and to the Office of Accreditation. The Office of Accreditation will note the citation of noncompliance on the district or school accreditation record and notify the district of this action. No action to downgrade the district or school accreditation status will be recommended.

This citation will remain on record until the district or school has **successfully** completed the next scheduled administration of the same test for which the irregularity was originally verified.

C. CITATION PLACED ON THE ACCREDITATION RECORD THAT MAY RESULT IN DOWNGRADE OF ACCREDITATION STATUS

a. If a district or school accreditation record contains **two** testing citations that do not jeopardize the security and integrity of the test(s) or the accuracy of test results, the Office of Student Assessment will issue a written notification of the violations to the superintendent of the school district and the Office of Accreditation. The Office of Accreditation will note the citations of noncompliance on the district or school accreditation record and will notify the district of this action. Both citations of noncompliance noted on the district or school accreditation record will be presented to the Commission on School Accreditation for appropriate action.

Citations will remain on record until the district or school has **successfully** completed the next scheduled administration of the same tests for which the irregularities were originally verified.

b. If it is determined that a violation of a testing requirement jeopardizes the security and integrity of the test(s) or the accuracy of test results, the Office of Student Assessment will issue written notification of the violation to the

superintendent of the school district and to the Office of Accreditation. The Office of Accreditation will note the citation of noncompliance on the district or school accreditation record and notify the district of this action. The citation of noncompliance will be presented to the Commission on School Accreditation for appropriate action.

This citation will remain on record until the district has **successfully** completed the next scheduled administration of the same test for which the irregularity was originally verified.

D. INVALIDATION OF SCORES

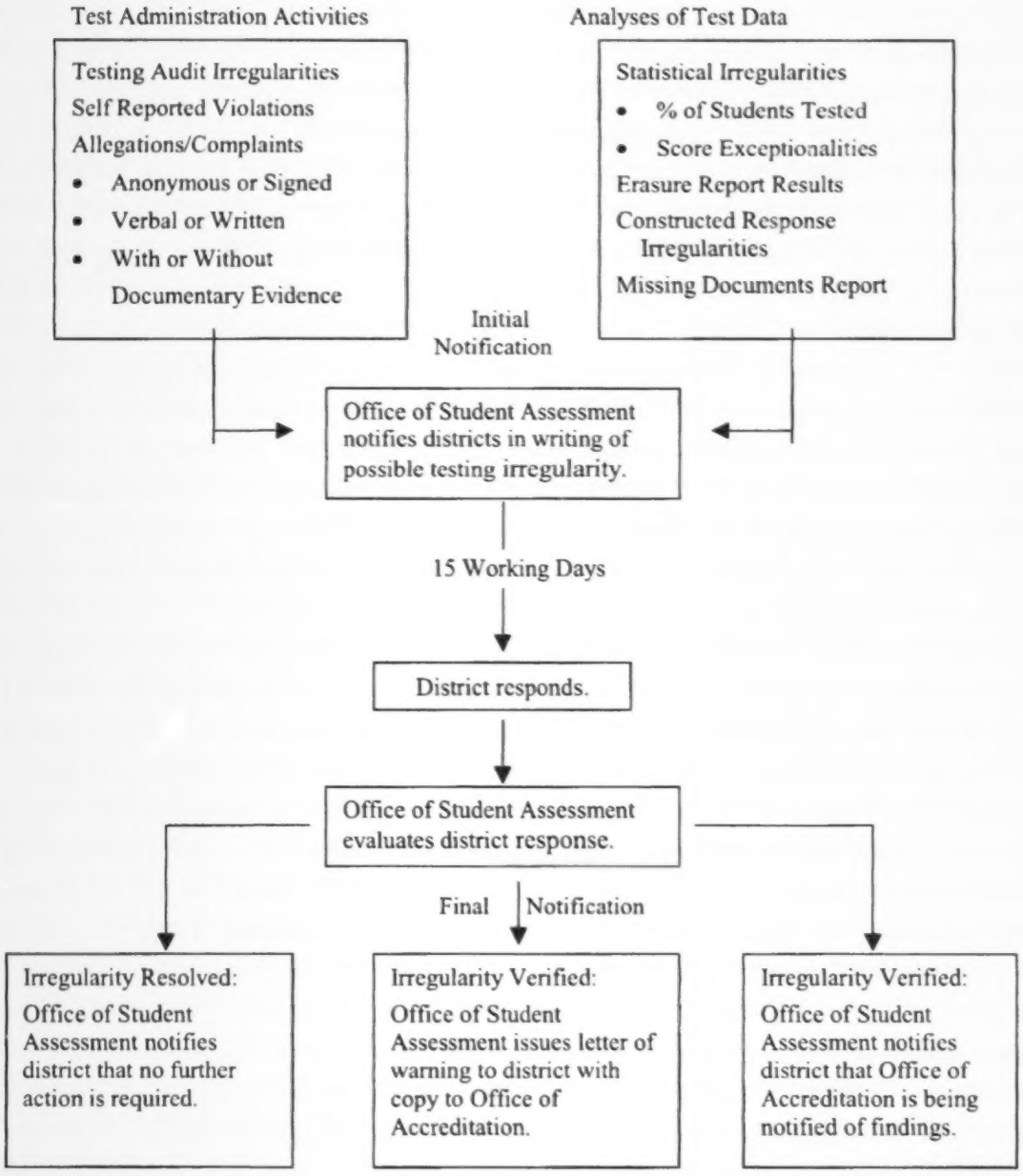
a. Student Retest and Score Invalidation Procedure

The State Superintendent of Education may order the local school district to have students retake the examination(s) at the district's expense for all areas in question. Should the local district choose not to have students reexamined to establish validity, or in the case of norm-referenced testing where retesting would be inappropriate, the State Superintendent of Education may recommend to the State Board of Education that any affected scores be invalidated. The local district will be notified of any recommendation going to the State Board of Education and given an opportunity to appear before the State Board of Education or its designee.

b. Individual Irregularity Procedure

If there is evidence of a nature that confirms one or more individual testing irregularities on the Subject Area Tests or other tests that have high stakes consequences for individual students, the individual(s) in question will be notified in writing of the irregularity and given an opportunity to provide an explanation and evidence that the questioned score(s) is/are consistent with other test scores or other academic performance. If retesting of individuals on the test is required and the retesting yields scores that would deny students a diploma or affect promotion/retention decisions after all retesting opportunities have been exhausted, affected individuals will be given an opportunity to appeal to the State Board of Education the decision to invalidate their original scores on the test. No hearing will be granted to any student who has not completed all other requirements for graduation or promotion and exhausted all retake opportunities.

Procedure for Handling Possible Testing Irregularities


Test Administration Activities
Testing Audit Irregularities
Self Reported Violations
Allegations/Complaints
• Anonymous or Signed
• Verbal or Written
• With or Without Documentary Evidence
Analyses of Test Data
Statistical Irregularities
• % of Students Tested
• Score Exceptionalities
Erasure Report Results
Constructed Response Irregularities
Missing Documents Report
Initial Notification
Office of Student Assessment notifies districts in writing of possible testing irregularity.
15 Working Days
District responds.
Office of Student Assessment evaluates district response.
Final Notification
Irregularity Resolved:
Office of Student Assessment notifies district that no further action is required.
Irregularity Verified:
Office of Student Assessment issues letter of warning to district with copy to Office of Accreditation.
Irregularity Verified:
Office of Student Assessment notifies district that Office of Accreditation is being notified of findings.

The procedure for handling testing irregularities is repeated for each major testing administration (fall, spring, and end of summer).

GLOSSARY

ACADEMIC CORE

Required course offerings in which specific skills contained in the ***Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks*** must be taught. Subjects in the academic core are English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

ACADEMIC YEAR

The amount of time that must be scheduled in the educational calendar and that consists of a minimum of 180 teaching days. (See *teaching day*.) Two of the 180 days may be 60% days provided that there are 198 minutes of actual instruction and the remainder of each day is used for professional development and/or testing.

ACCELERATED COURSES

Courses designed for those students who can master the general curriculum and engage in more in-depth study of additional skills.

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

The entire process that holds all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, and school boards) accountable for student achievement (growth and proficiency). The accountability system includes the statewide assessment system, individual student accountability standards (grade level benchmarks and graduation requirements), an accreditation system that includes a system of rewards and sanctions for both school districts and individual schools, and procedures for the intervention in Priority Schools and schools that fail to improve over time.

ACCREDITATION RECORD SUMMARY

A continuous record maintained on each school district in the state reflecting the extent to which accreditation requirements are met and used as the basis for assigning annual accreditation statuses. The Accreditation Record Summary is updated as citations of noncompliance with requirements are added or deleted, and school district officials are notified in writing of such.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The performance-based accreditation system for public schools that holds school districts accountable for process standards and individual schools accountable for performance standards (growth and proficiency).

ACCREDITATION STATUS

The annual status for a school district assigned by the Commission on School Accreditation and approved by the State Board of Education based on compliance with process standards using verified accreditation data from the previous school year. The accreditation statuses are Accredited, Advised, and Withdrawn. (See Policy 2.3.)

ADVISED ACCREDITATION STATUS

An accreditation status assigned to a school district that has a verified process standard deficiency on record from the previous school year.

ADMINISTRATOR

Any staff member employed by a school board who is assigned the responsibility for coordinating, directing, supervising, or otherwise administering programs, services, and/or personnel under the auspices of the program, school, or district.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

A program of college level courses and examinations for secondary school students administered by the College Board, 2970 Clairmont Road, Suite 250, Atlanta, Georgia 30329, Telephone (404) 636-9465. High schools providing advanced placement courses must follow guidelines published by the College Board.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

A public elementary/secondary school that addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school, provides nontraditional education, serves as an adjunct to a regular school, and falls outside of the categories of regular education, special education, or vocational education.

ALLOCATED TIME

A scheduled period of time that provides for the achievement of prescribed objectives. The schedule of allocated instructional time should be in written form showing time designated for activities during the school day, week, month, or year.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATION

An annual performance report prepared for each public school and distributed by the State Superintendent of Education that provides the following information: (1) the percentage of students proficient (at grade level) and (2) achievement of its annual growth expectation.

APPEAL

An appeal made to the State Board of Education following a hearing before the Commission on School Accreditation or the Commission's representative. The appeal is on the record made before the Commission's representative or the Commission. Upon written application, the State Board of Education may consider new factual evidence.

ASSISTANT TEACHER

A school district employee assigned to assist a licensed teacher and who works under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher.

ATTENDANCE CENTER

A school in a school district that is located on one school site and has one principal administering the educational program for all the grades in the school.

BASIC SKILLS

Specific learning objectives that represent the most fundamental knowledge in the areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics.

BENCHMARKS

Statements of what students should know and be able to do by certain levels or times.

CARNEGIE UNIT

A standard measure of high school work indicating the minimum amount of time that instruction in a subject has been provided. Awarding of one Carnegie unit indicates that a minimum of 140 hours of instruction has been provided in regular and laboratory classes over a school year; awarding of ½ Carnegie unit indicates that a minimum of 70 hours has been provided.

CLASSROOM

A school room in which student instruction takes place.

CONSERVATORSHIP

A state of emergency in a district declared by the governor which gives the State Board of Education several options for action as described in MS Code 37-17-6.

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

A plan to correct deficiencies on record that shall be developed by the Mississippi Department of Education, in conjunction with the school district, when a school district is assigned an *ADVISED* accreditation status.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Independent study carried on through lessons and exercises that are provided to non-resident students by approved university extensions. (See ***Approved Courses for Secondary Schools in Mississippi***.)

CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST

A test designed to reveal what a student knows, understands, or can do in relation to specific performance objectives. CRTs are used to identify student strengths and weaknesses in terms of specific knowledge or skills that are goals of the instructional program.

DEVELOPMENTAL COURSE

A course designed to be taught in any grade 7-12 (or any combination of grades 7-12 served within a school) which does not appear as an approved course in the current edition of ***Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi*** but has received approval to be taught in a school district. (See Appendix D.)

DEFICIENCY

The failure of a school district to comply with an accreditation requirement.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION

Act or process in which a teacher is actually guiding (instructing) students toward achieving specific learning objectives.

DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES

Courses utilizing telecommunications technologies including satellites, telephones, and cable-television systems to broadcast instruction from a central site to other classrooms.

DISTRICT LEVEL ACCREDITATION

The accreditation status of all public school districts based on compliance with process standards as determined annually by the Commission on School Accreditation. Annual accreditation statuses are assigned in the fall of each school year and are based on verified accreditation data from the previous school year.

DROPOUT

A student who leaves a school at any time and for any reason, except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another school.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

Kindergarten and assistant teacher programs that comply with ***Mississippi Kindergarten Guidelines, Mississippi Elementary School Assistant Teacher Program Regulations***, and ***Mississippi Reading Improvement Program Regulations*** approved by the State Board of Education and published by the Mississippi Department of Education. (See also *kindergarten* and *pre-kindergarten*.)

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

Practices and behaviors designed to establish and implement conditions that promote student learning.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Primary, elementary, and intermediate division of the educational system within the school district comprising grades/levels K through 6 or K through 8 or any combination of such grades.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

An academic course with defined objectives, evaluation criteria, and mastery requirements that exposes students to material or instruction that would not otherwise be part of a student's curriculum during the normal sequence of his/her educational experiences.

EVALUATION

Formal appraisal (assessment) of educational experiences, including the performance of schools, educational programs, personnel, and students. Evaluations are conducted to determine strengths and areas which need improvement and may involve the use of various measurements designed to appraise the effects of educational experiences.

EVALUATION TEAM

A trained evaluation team assigned to a Priority School within fifteen days after notification that the school has been designated as a Priority School. The evaluation team shall consist of a minimum of seven trained members appointed by the State Superintendent of Education and approved by the State Board of Education from the following categories: (a) school superintendents, (b) school principals, (c) curriculum coordinators, (d) at least two teachers, (e) local school board members, (f) community leaders, (g) parents, and (h) institutions of higher learning personnel.

EXIT EXAMINATIONS

Assessments required for students to graduate from high school.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

School district sponsored student activities that require administrative supervision and student involvement outside the allocated time for instruction. Student participation in extracurricular activities may be noted on the student's transcript, but academic credit may not be awarded.

EXTENDED YEAR PROGRAM

A program of instruction offered by the district after the close of the regular academic year that is designed for students who need extra time to complete course objectives/requirements.

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY EXAMINATION (FLE)

The test that all high school students must pass as a prerequisite for receiving a standard diploma. This test is being phased out and is being replaced by the four subject area tests.

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY SKILLS

Specific learning objectives that represent the application of basic skills to everyday life situations and that are tested through the Functional Literacy Examination.

GRADE LEVEL PROFICIENCY STANDARD

A performance standard that establishes the percentage of students proficient in each school based on a demonstrated range of performance in relation to content as reflected in the ***Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.***

GROWTH EXPECTATION

A reasonable expectation for improved student academic achievement based on annual assessment data and using a psychometrically approved formula to track progress. The formula used to calculate the growth expectation will result in a composite score each year for each school.

HEARING

The process by which all controversies involving the accreditation levels of school districts are initially heard by a duly authorized representative of the Commission before whom a complete record is made. (See policy 5.0.)

HIGH SCHOOL

The secondary division within the educational system of the school district comprising grades 9-12 or any combination of such grades.

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF

Employees of a school district who are professionally trained and licensed to provide instruction and services to students enrolled in the schools of the district.

INVESTIGATIVE EVALUATION (COMPLAINT AGAINST DISTRICT)

An evaluation that is conducted in a school district in response to a formal written complaint. All formal complaints made against schools or districts must be submitted to the Commission in writing and bear the signature of the individual(s) filing the complaint. The written complaint shall contain specific details concerning alleged violations. When the complaint is received, the superintendent is notified in writing of the nature of the complaint and informed that the district is subject to an unannounced audit to investigate the allegations. If the complaint addresses an area over which the Commission has no authority, the individual filing the complaint is notified.

KINDERGARTEN

That portion of the elementary school serving children who have reached the age of five years on or before September 1.

KINDERGARTEN INSTRUCTIONAL DAY

At this level, the school day. (For specific requirements, see the current edition of ***Mississippi Kindergarten Guidelines***.)

LAB-BASED SCIENCE COURSE

A science course in which at least 20% of the instructional time is required to include laboratory experiences.

LABORATORY

Room or rooms basically/appropriately equipped and used by students for the supervised study of some branch of science or the application of scientific principles.

LEARNING CENTER

An area in the kindergarten classroom that contains a collection of materials and activities to introduce, teach, reinforce, and/or enrich a skill or concept.

LEARNING CENTER ACTIVITIES

Activities housed in the kindergarten learning centers that promote student participation through developmentally appropriate instructional techniques.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Statements of what a student will know, feel, or do when a course is completed.

LIBRARY-MEDIA CENTER

A specially designed space in each school equipped for centrally housing an organized collection of materials and equipment representing a broad range of current learning media, including instructional technology. The facility contains areas for individualized study and for large and small group instruction. The facility is organized and administered to function as a learning laboratory where the use of all media is purposeful, planned, and integrated with the educational program and instructional processes of the school.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Includes all print materials (e.g., books, periodicals) and non-print materials (e.g., computer software, videotapes). Not included are all equipment (e.g., computer hardware, overhead projectors, VCRs) and supplies (e.g., cataloging cards, accession books).

MIDDLE SCHOOL

A school with any configuration of intermediate grades 4-8 whose principal may be licensed as an elementary school administrator or a secondary school administrator.

MISSION STATEMENT

A school district's statement of purpose that is used in strategic planning as the basis for educational decisions.

MISSISSIPPI CURRICULUM CONTENT ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

A program of statewide assessment designed to improve the operation and management of public schools by providing educators, parents, students, legislators, and the general public with meaningful achievement data from the school, district, and state levels. The program consists of two components: (1) a norm-referenced achievement testing program to be administered in selected grades and (2) a criterion-referenced testing program which assesses basic skills and knowledge and application of selected high school subjects.

NORM-REFERENCED TEST (NRT)

A test that provides information about the performance of examinees relative to other examinees. A norm-referenced test yields a measure of relative performance of the individual or group by comparison with the performance of other individuals or groups taking the same test.

ON-LINE COURSE

Instruction delivered via the Internet. (See ***Approved Courses for Secondary Schools in Mississippi.***)

ON-SITE

Any geographical location selected by the local professional development committee for professional development activity as planned by the school district and provided during contractual time at the school district expense.

ON-SITE EVALUATIONS

On-site evaluations or investigations of a school district that the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Education, or the Commission on School Accreditation has the authority to call at any time. If deficiencies are found in meeting accreditation standards, the superintendent is notified in writing and given thirty (30) days from the receipt of notification to provide a written response. The report of findings is filed in the current accreditation records in the Office of Accreditation.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PROFICIENT IN EACH SCHOOL

The percentage of students at the school who are performing at a criterion level established through a formal procedure including educators, parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders.

PERFORMANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

A classification assigned to each individual school based on (1) the percentage of students at the school who are performing at a criterion level (proficiency) and (2) the degree to which student performance has improved over time (expected growth value). (See Policy 3.3.)

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Output or product standards that address selected components of the statewide testing program and other outcome measures related to the performance of a school.

PERSONNEL ACCREDITATION DATA REPORTING SYSTEM

School district employee information required by the Mississippi Department of Education on an annual basis. This information is transmitted electronically, reflects the daily schedule of each employee, and is used to determine district compliance with a number of accreditation standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The instructional requirements for physical education that are specified in the ***Fitness through Physical Education Framework***. Elective units for graduation include participation in interscholastic athletic activities that meet the instructional requirement specified in the ***Fitness through Physical Education Framework*** and that are sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

PLANNING PERIOD

An unencumbered period of time during the teaching day or week required for each classroom teacher except vocational teachers who teach in time blocks of 50 minutes or more.

POLICY

A statement of official intent adopted by the school board and recorded as official action in school board minutes. The school district must comply with all school board policies.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Instructional program serving children who have reached the age of four years on or before September 1.

PRINCIPAL

The individual who is responsible for the total program of a school and who holds valid and appropriate administrator certification.

PRIORITY SCHOOL

The school level performance classification that indicates a school has not achieved its annual growth expectation and has not achieved the percentage of students proficient (on grade level), as established by the State Board of Education.

PROCEDURE

A statement of processes by which policies, regulations, and standards are carried out.

PROCESS STANDARDS

Input standards that address accepted educational principles and practices believed to promote educational quality. (See policy 2.2.)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The growth-promoting learning process that empowers stakeholders (teachers, administrators, staff, and other school personnel) to improve the educational organization.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR EDUCATORS

As part of the school improvement plan for a Priority School, the professional development plan that is prepared and implemented in accordance with Section 37-18-7 for those school administrators, teachers, or other employees who are identified by the evaluation team as needing improvement.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Any employee of the school district whose assigned duties require state licensure.

PROFICIENCY

An established criterion level based on the demonstrated range of performance in relation to content as reflected in the ***Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks***. (See also *percentage of students proficient in each school.)*

PUBLIC NOTICE

After a state of emergency has been declared for a school district, the public notice that the Commission on School Accreditation files at least once a week for at least three consecutive weeks in a newspaper published within the immediate or general vicinity of the affected school district in accordance with Section 37-17-6(12), *Mississippi Code of 1972,* as amended.

SCALED SCORE

A transformation of the raw score to have a desired mean and standard deviation for ease of interpretation. Scaled scores provide meaningful year-to-year comparisons, but they cannot be used across subject areas or subtests. Scaled scores represent approximately equal units on a continuous scale. Therefore, a difference of 5 points between two student's scores represents the same amount of difference in performance wherever it occurs on the scale. Scaled scores can be designed to have any range and midpoint (e.g., 200 through 500, with a midpoint of 350).

SCHOOL

An institution that exists for the purpose of teaching school-aged children, that consists of one physical plant, that includes instructional staff members and students, and that is in session each school year.

SCHOOL BOARD

As used in this document, the policy-making body of a public school district.

SCHOOL DAY

That portion of the calendar day that includes the teaching day, intermissions, and any additional time included in the employee contract. School day defines the normal working day for employees.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A plan that a Priority School is required to develop based on the findings of the evaluation team report and the results of a public meeting. The Mississippi Department of Education and evaluation team leader shall assist the school principal and other local school officials in the development of a school improvement plan. A local parents/citizens advisory council shall be established by the evaluation team at the school to provide input and guidance into the development of the school improvement plan and its evaluation. The school improvement plan shall be developed and approved by the principal of the Priority School, the superintendent of the local school district, the local school board, and a majority of the teachers of the school.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Standards for individual schools based on student achievement data using established proficiency levels (percentage of students performing at grade level) and a reasonable expectation for annual growth in student achievement.

SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

The foundation document a school uses to maintain a safe and secure educational environment.

SCHOOL TERM

(See *academic year.*)

SCHOOL YEAR

(See *academic year.*)

SECONDARY SCHOOL

A school that contains any or all of grades 9 through 12 and may include grades 7 and 8.

SELF-CONTAINED CLASS

A classroom where students are taught their subjects by the same teacher for the entire teaching day. Students in some self-contained classrooms are resourced for instruction in art, music, and physical education.

SHOW CAUSE HEARING

The hearing that the Commission on School Accreditation conducts to allow the officials of the affected district to present evidence or other reasons as to why the accredited status should not be withdrawn. This occurs before the Commission recommends to the State Board of Education that the accredited status of a district be withdrawn.

SPECIAL TEST AUDITS

Audits that include reports regarding potential testing irregularities or test security violations and audits that are regularly conducted on-site before, during, and following scheduled assessments to promote the integrity and security of the Mississippi Assessment System.

STANDARDS

Criteria by which school districts and schools are assessed. The two types of standards used in the performance-based accreditation system are performance and process.

STATEWIDE TESTING PROGRAM

(See ***Mississippi Curriculum Content Assessment System.)***

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

School district sponsored activities which require administrative provision and student involvement during the teaching day. (See *teaching day.*) Student participation in extracurricular activities may be noted on the student's transcript, but academic credit may not be awarded.

STUDENT SUPPORT PERSONNEL

A professional qualified to offer student support services (e.g., psychologist, guidance counselor, social worker, psychometrist, etc.).

STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

A program of activities designed to assist and/or complement instructional activities for all students through the following types of activities: planned counseling; consultation; student appraisal, diagnosis, and remediation; and follow-up.

SUBJECT AREA

A division or field of organized knowledge for which state curriculum guidelines have been prepared.

SUBJECT AREA TESTS

Assessments which measure content knowledge in the subject areas of Algebra I, English II, Biology I, and U. S. History from 1877.

SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM

A program of instruction offered by the district during the summer months after the close of the regular academic year. The program of instruction is designed for students who need extra time to complete course requirements and/or for students who wish to enroll in new courses/subjects.

SUPERINTENDENT

The school board employee who is responsible for administering the operations and activities of schools within the district and for implementing the decisions of the school board. The superintendent holds a valid Class AA license in school administration.

SUPERVISOR

An individual who provides direct assistance to instructional and support staff and who holds a valid Class AA license in supervision or administration.

SUPPORT STAFF

Persons employed by an educational organization to provide services to students and staff.

TEACHER

Any person employed by the school district who is required by law to obtain a teacher's license from the State Board of Education and who is assigned an instructional area of work as defined by the Mississippi Department of Education (e.g., employment in an official capacity for the purpose of imparting knowledge, skills, information, and ideas to students in an instructional setting). {MS Code 37-19-1}

TEACHING DAY

A day in which a minimum of 330 minutes of instruction and/or evaluation and/or district approved group testing is provided. Exceptions are days with fewer than 330 instructional minutes that are part of an instructional week of at least 27.5 hours.

TEST AUDITS

(See *special test audits.*)

WITHDRAWN STATUS

The status of a school district when the accreditation of the school district is withdrawn due to noncompliance with its corrective action plan. The status is listed as Accreditation-Withdrawn and the record of that district will continue to be maintained.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
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